

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the instant application is respectfully requested. The present amendment is responsive to the Office Action of October 13, 2003, in which claims 1-16 are presently pending. Of those, claims 1 and 3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,514,647 to Hinogami, et al. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hinogami, in view of U.S. Patent 6,784,091 to Nuetzel, et al. In addition, claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hinogami, in view of U.S. Patent 5,768,107 to Ouchi, et al.

However, the Examiner has indicated that claims 2, 5, 6 and 8 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Finally, claims 9-16 have been allowed. For the following reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance.

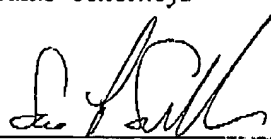
Claim 8 has been cancelled, with the elements thereof being incorporated into independent claim 1. As such, the remaining claims that are dependent therefrom are now also allowable over the art of record. Accordingly, each of the outstanding §103 rejections of the remaining claims have been overcome, and it is respectfully requested that each of the same be withdrawn.

For the above stated reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. No new matter has been entered and no additional fees are believed to be required. However, if any fees are due with respect to this Amendment, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 09-0458 maintained by Applicant's attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,
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